

Opening of the 4th edition of the Beirut Art Film Festival “Tomorrow”: the youth, the environment, and the hope of a better future

November 21, 2018



The opening of the 4th edition of Beirut Art Film Festival (BAFF) was held at the Metropolis-Empire-Sofil, in the presence of the ambassador of the United States H.E. Elizabeth Richards, the Swiss ambassador H.E. Monika Schmutz Kirgöz, the Swedish ambassador H.E. Jörgen Lindström, the first secretary at the Belgian embassy Jeroen Dubois, the cultural affairs officer at the United States embassy Kristin Smith, and the organizers Alice Mogabgab Karam, Maria Chakhtoura, Nadine Mokdessi, as well as representatives of partner institutions and festival guests.

The kickoff of the 4th edition was held with the projection of the **World Premiere** of *Josephine Baker, The Story of an Awakening* (2018, 52', Ilana Navaro, English) in the presence of the director Ilana Navaro and in partnership with the United States Embassy. It is the fabulous story of the first black superstar, Josephine Baker, a poor little girl from Missouri who became the Queen of Paris. The journey of a woman who rose from the status of “banana dancer” to humanist fighter when she joined the French Resistance.

And the projection of *Maurice Béjart, l'âme de la danse* (2017, 65', Henri de Gerlache, French) in partnership with the Swiss Embassy. This film chronicles the unique destiny of the outstanding choreographer. From the child to the choreographer performing on the world's greatest stages, he is definitely one of the most renowned creators of the XXth century.

The fourth edition of BAFF is held under the theme of “**Tomorrow**”: the commitment towards youth, the protection of the environment, and the hope to change the future, through the lessons from the past!

BAFF inaugurated this year dynamic and committed partnerships with: The Ministry of Education & Higher Education who is supporting the program of BAFF @ Schools 2018, The Embassy of the United States contributing as well to BAFF @ Schools 2018, the Swiss Embassy with the launch of the awareness campaign “No WATER, No LIFE”, and the Ministry of Tourism for the launching of a series of documentaries on national heritage, and where every year a film will be produced by BAFF, and screened in Lebanon and overseas.

The festival also screens movies to the benefit of 5 Lebanese NGOs, whose credo is solidarity: AFEL, Brave Heart, Myschoolpulse, The Youth of the Order of Malta and CAP-HO

During her opening speech, Alice Mogabgab Karam said: “Despite the difficult situation prevailing in Lebanon, especially in terms of environmental degradation and high pollution, art is a catalyst for change towards a better future.”

BAFF in two stages

BAFF Intramuros takes over the Metropolis-Empire-Sofil’s two cinema auditoriums until Sunday November 25 with a selection of sixty documentaries around the themes of architecture, dance, painting, art, archeology, music, design, photography, heritage and also the environment.

A special programming dedicated to Lebanon is scheduled on **Thursday November 22** with the following:

- The documentary ***We Made Every Living Thing from Water*** (2018, 43’, Paul Cochrane/AUB, Arabic and English, English subtitles) at 6:00 pm: “Tomorrow” is at the heart of this national day with the alarming question of the environment in Lebanon. The documentary is a finding of the extent of the damage. It is based on scientific information and interviews of water specialists. The screening will be followed by a roundtable and a discussion with Lama Fakhri, Middle East and North Africa Deputy Director at Human Rights Watch and the movie producers, moderated by Habib Battah (Editor in Chief of Beirut Report Website).
- Hats off to the leading figure of early Lebanese cinema, Georges Nasser who features two documentaries ***L’Artisanat au Liban*** (1960, 24’) and ***Un Certain Nasser*** (2017, 65’)
- Films dedicated to Tripoli: ***Mar10 – I’m bored. Aren’t you bored?*** (2018, 18’) and ***Niemeyer 4 Ever*** (2018, 30’)

BAFF Extramuros (November 1st until 30th) sets out to meet the public audience outside of the capital, organizing more than 150 screenings in schools, universities, cultural centers. It will continue with the following:

- BAFF (Loves) Lebanon: more than forty documentaries on art were screened in 16 cultural centers all around Lebanon. Last screening on Saturday November 24. Program available on www.bafflebanon.com
- BAFF @ Schools (Nov. 1 – 30) with the projection of two documentaries – Lady Liberty (2014, 60’) and We Made Every Living Thing from Water (2018, 30’) – in all schools across Lebanon.

In BAFF 4 Youth, part of the Extramuros program, the festival set out to meet university students in the 13 Lebanese universities, where documentaries were screened from November 1st until 19th, in campuses across Lebanon.

Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony of BAFF, in partnership with TV5 Monde and the Institut du monde arabe – Paris, will be on **Friday November 30**, at the Institut Français – Beirut with, at 6:00 pm, ***Les Yeux de la parole*** (2016, 80', David Daurier and Jean-Marie Montangerand): In the suburb of Aix-en-Provence, middle school children are following workshops about the creation of the first Arabic opera. The students will then discover the topical work of Fady Jomar, a Syrian poet who adapted the Kalila Wa Dimna tales for an Arabic opera to be performed as part of the International Festival of Lyric Art, and at 8:00 pm, ***Kalila wa Dimna (2016, 95', Opera by Moneim Adwan)***: the first opera in Arabic by Moneim Adwan treads a fine line between the human and the animal, fable and tragedy, Arabic and French, Western form and Eastern music, to tell the story of idealism crushed by ambition.

The screenings program is available on: www.bafflebanon.org

Tickets: Virgin Ticketing BoxOffice 01.999666 / www.ticketingboxoffice.com

The Patrons of the Beirut Art Film Festival

Bankmed Group (BAFF sponsor), The Robert A. Matta Foundation, The Alexis & Anne-Marie Habib Foundation, Embassy of the United States in Lebanon

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